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## St. Lawrence Lodge COVID-19 Bulletin

**Issue Date:** April 24, 2020

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide current information regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and to inform people with respect to decisions made by the Home as guided by Public Health and Ministry of Health and Long Term Care policy decisions.

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Covid-19 is likely the biggest public health crisis Canada has ever faced. Lives are at stake, including yours and your loved one's. The care and protection of long term care Residents – and the dedicated staff who look after them – has become a critical issue in Ontario.

Right now, physical distancing and LTC visitor restrictions are essential in combatting Covid-19. We acknowledge how hard this is for all concerned; however, it is necessary to save lives.

It is up to all of us to take steps that keep our loved ones, ourselves, and our communities safe.

Since we don't yet have a vaccine or cure, the best we have is prevention. We all have a role in preventing the transmission of Covid-19. We can prevent the spread of Covid-19 by washing our hands, avoiding contact with people who are frail and vulnerable, and above all, staying home. We are all in this together.

To help manage this global pandemic, the Ontario Government has issued Directives and Emergency Orders that will help Long Term Care Homes to take the steps they need to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of Covid-19 and to provide care to our Residents and support for our staff during the pandemic.

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### **Covid-19 News**

#### **Testing Guidance from the Province**

- On April 9<sup>th</sup>, the Province issued new Directives related to the level of testing that is to be carried out in Long Term Care Homes. The highlights include:

- Any Resident with the following symptoms should be tested:
  - A fever of 37.8 degrees or higher
  - New or worsening respiratory conditions such as cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, nasal congestion, difficulty swallowing.
  - Evidence of pneumonia.
  - Potential atypical symptoms should also be considered.
- A Resident WITHOUT symptoms who lives in the same room as a Resident who HAS symptoms must be tested, as well.

**Current Status**

As a result of the expanded screening and testing requirements, the Home reports the following updates, as of April 24<sup>th</sup>:

Number of Residents With Symptoms to be tested:        2        Spruce Lodge

Number of Residents Without Symptoms to be tested:    1        Spruce Lodge

Please note that should the continuing active screening of Residents indicate that a Resident has to be tested, the primary contact person(s) for that Resident will be contacted by the Home to advise them of the situation.

Due to the fact that earlier this month we had 3 Residents on Spruce Lodge showing respiratory symptoms, the District Health Unit advised of a Respiratory Outbreak for Spruce Lodge only. I am pleased to report that the Health Unit has declared that respiratory outbreak to be over for Spruce Lodge.

However, we currently have a suspect outbreak situation remaining on Spruce Lodge pending the outcome of testing.

**Mothers' Day Recognition**

Mother's' Day is always a huge day of recognition for the many Mothers living at the Lodge. Many people have been asking about what to do to honour their loved one this year. With the current restrictions on the flow of goods into the Home, we are advising resident families to please not send flowers this year.

However, we do not want this important day of recognition to go by without a proper acknowledgment and celebration. So, we are planning to provide a small floral gift for our female residents with financial support coming from the SLL Foundation. Each resident will receive a flower and vase arrangement. The gift will be delivered to the Home a few days in advance of Mother's Day. The items will be cleaned and then quarantined prior to delivery on the Sunday. We trust that our families will be accepting of this initiative given the current situation.

We encourage anyone planning on sending Mother's Day cards to please do so well in advance so that we can quarantine the mail in advance of delivery. We know that these important greeting cards and expressions of love will brighten a person's day.

We also want you to know that most of the members of our Activation Department will be on duty that day to celebrate Mother's Day with our residents. They will be having special features to recognize the importance of this annual celebration for our Mothers.

### **Visitors**

Long Term Care Homes are closed to visitors. Essential visitors are permitted. These people include those visitors who are visiting a gravely ill Resident or those persons who are performing essential clinical health care services. All essential visitors are to be actively screened before entering the building, including temperature checks. If they do not pass the screening, then they are not allowed to enter. Essential visitors attending with gravely ill Residents are limited to one person at a time. All essential visitors are required to wear personal protective equipment while in the building.

### **Communications With Loved Ones**

Our Activation staff have been doing a great job helping Residents connect with their loved ones. We have I-phones available should you wish to call, facetime, text, or email with a Resident. Contact the Activation Department at 613-345-0255 ext 4118 to coordinate a family session.

There is also a new Facebook Group for St. Lawrence Lodge Residents. Let the Activation Department know that you wish to join, give them your email address and they will issue an invitation for you to join the Group.

A thank you is also extended to the Watson family for their kind donation of 2 Ipads for Residents to use to connect with their loved ones. We appreciate having this technology available at this critical time!

We have received enquiries about sending cards and messages through regular mail. Yes, we can receive and distribute regular mail items. We have a quarantine protocol that we use in advance of forwarding the mail to the recipient. I'm sure the greeting cards will brighten someone's day!

### **Personal Protective Equipment Status**

We can report that the Home has been able to maintain reasonable levels of personal protective equipment so far. The following companies, individuals, and corporations have been instrumental in helping us to access necessary supplies:

Jeff Earle, Ground Master    The Town of Gananoque    Canadian Solar Farms  
Canarm    Tomlinson Construction    City of Brockville

Special thanks are extended to these Friends of St. Lawrence Lodge for their assistance.

## **New Guidance for Long Term Care Homes Received This Week**

All Long Term Care Homes received new Directives from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care this week. The newest Directives are highlighted below:

### **Testing in LTC Homes**

The province is starting proactive surveillance testing to understand the current status of COVID-19 in individual homes, which includes the targeted testing of asymptomatic residents and staff.

The testing information includes the following:

- Each Public Health Unit (PHU) should immediately begin developing a local implementation plan, in coordination with the Ontario Health region and MOLTC region to facilitate testing of every resident and staff at each LTC home.
- Although testing of residents is a priority, the plan should also enable an understanding of the prevalence of COVID-19 amongst staff, particularly asymptotically.
- This plan should be implemented as soon as possible. PHUs should prioritize homes with a “red” status and homes currently in outbreak with residents or staff showing symptoms. PHUs can use their judgment to identify additional information available to prioritize more testing and draw on local supports to increase capacity, such as local community paramedics

We have been in regular contact with the Health Unit regarding this new directive. At this time, the Health Unit is developing its plan as to how it will implement testing of all residents and staff at regional Long Term Care Homes. The timeline for St. Lawrence Lodge residents and employees to be tested is not known at this time. We will advise once more detail is available.

Again, I would like to thank the many family members who continue to send us messages of support and encouragement. Your words have a special meaning and are much appreciated by all.

Regards,



Tom Harrington  
Administrator